

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 2570

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: NGDS
TAGS: EFIS, PBOR, NO, UR
SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL SOVIET DEMARCHE ON SVALBARD FISHERIES
PROTECTION ZONE

1. HELGE VINDENES, DIRECTOR OF THE MFA NORTHERN AFFAIRS
WORKING GROUP, BRIEFED EMBOFF MAY 24 ON THE MAY 22 DEMARCHE
MADE BY SOVIET AMBASSADOR KIRICHENKO TO FOREIGN MINISTER
FRYDENLUND ON THE SVALBARD FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE (FPZ).

2. AS IN THE CASE OF THE MAY 3 DEMARCHE THAT KIRICHENKO
HAD DELIVERED TO LOS MINISTER EVENSEN ON BEHALF OF SOVIET
FISHERIES MINISTER ISHKOV, THE MAY 22 PRESENTATION WAS
DELIVERED ORALLY. VINDENES SAID THAT THE GON, IN THIS
INSTANCE, TOO, REGARDED THE LACK OF DOCUMENTATION AS
INDICATING SOMETHING LESS THAN ABSOLUTE RIGIDITY IN THE
SOVIET POSITION. THE CONTENT OF THE MAY 22 DEMARCHE, HOWEVER,
WAS LESS MILD THAN THAT OF MAY 3.

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3. VINDENES SAID THAT KIRICHENKO STATED THAT THE SOVIETS
HAD STUDIED THE REGULATIONS SET FORTH IN THE NORWEGIAN
DECREE OF APRIL 28 AND HAD FOUND THAT THOSE REGULATIONS
WERE NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE SPITZBERGEN TREATY. THE
SOVIETS THUS CONSIDER IT NECESSARY, VINDENES RELATED,
TO CONFIRM THEIR NOTE OF JUNE 15, 1977. (SEE OSLO 3187, 1977).

4. VINDENES SAID THAT KIRICHENKO ALSO STATED THAT THE MANNER IN WHICH THE GON HAD PROCEEDED, WITH A UNILATERAL DECISION, AFFECTING AN AREA WHERE THE USSR HAS LEGITIMATE RIGHTS AND TRADITIONAL INTERESTS WAS NOT HARMONIOUS WITH GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS.

5. THE SOVIETS EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT THE GON PREFERRED TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION RATHER THAN TO "CONTINUE WORK WITH A VIEW TO FINDING A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT AT THE TABLE OF NEGOTIATION."

6. KIRICHENKO STATED THAT THE USSR HOPES THAT THE GON WILL TAKE NO ACTION THAT COULD LEAD TO UNDESIRABLE COMPLICATIONS.

7. FRYDENLUND, AT THE CONCLUSION OF KIRICHENKO'S PRESENTATION, STATED THAT THE GON PLANS TO STUDY THE MATTER BEFORE REPLYING TO THE POINTS RAISED BY THE USSR.

8. VINDENES SAID THE GON WAS SOMEWHAT RELIEVED BY THE FACT OF A PURELY ORAL PRESENTATION. THE GON HOPE, HE SAID, IS THAT THE USSR WILL CONTENT ITSELF WITH A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE AND HAVING STATED THEIR POINT DE JURE, WILL THEN, IN PRACTICE ABIDE BY THE REGULATIONS, THUS PROVIDING DE FACTO RECOGNITION OF THE FPZ. VINDENES SAID THAT THE GON WAS NOT TOO DISAPPOINTED BY THE MAY 22 DEMARCHE.

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9. COMMENT: THE SOVIETS HAVE FOLLOWED A PARALLEL COURSE TO THEIR TWO-STEP PROTEST LAST YEAR TO THE FPZ. AS WAS THE CASE IN THEIR PROTEST OF JANUARY 1977 (OSLO 0105) THE SOVIETS HAVE IN THEIR INITIAL MAY 3 PROTEST RESTRICTED THEMSELVES TO A COMMENT ABOUT THE SPECIFIC FISHERIES AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ASPECTS OF THE FISHERIES PRESERVATION ZONE. IN THEIR MAY 22ND DEMARCHE, HOWEVER, THEY HAVE ESSENTIALLY DROPPED REFERENCE TO THE FISHERIES ASPECTS OF THE PLAN (AS THEY DID IN THEIR JUNE 15TH NOTE LAST YEAR) AND HAVE MADE A WIDER POLITICAL COMMENT ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE NORWEGIAN PLAN ON BILATERAL SOVIET-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS. AS WAS THE CASE A YEAR AGO, THEY HAVE INVOKED THE SOVIETS "TRADITIONAL INTERESTS" IN THE AREA AND HAVE STATED THAT THE NORWEGIAN ACTION IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE SVALBARD TREATY. THIS LAST POINT ENTIRELY UNDERCUTS THE CABINET'S ALLEGED SATISFACTION THAT THE SVALBARD TREATY WAS NOT MENTIONED IN THE MAY 3RD NOTE (WHICH NORWEGIAN DCM BARTH REFERRED TO IN HIS MAY 15 CONVERSATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT PARA THREE STATE 123506).

10. THE SOVIETS, AS THEY DID LAST YEAR, HAVE ALSO REMINDED THE NORWEGIANS THEY CONSIDER THE FPZ PLANS TO BE INCONSISTENT WITH

THE KIND OF GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS THAT BOTH COUNTRIES
REPEATED ALLEGE THEY WANT (THE CARROT) WHILE URGING THE
GON TO AVOID ANY COMPLICATING SITUATIONS (THE STICK).

11. THE SOVIETS AND THE NORWEGIANS MAY BE HEADED TOWARDS
A CRUNCH OR A RESOLUTION OF THE FPZ ISSUE. ALL OF THE WORDS
AND NOTES THAT HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS
ON THE SUBJECT WILL NOW BE TESTED ON THE HIGH SEAS. AS THE
FISHING SEASON PICKS UP, SOVIET BEHAVIOR AND FISHING ACTIVITIES
EITHER WILL CONFIRM THE GON OPTIMISM ON SOVIET INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS
THE ZONE OR THEY WILL SHOW THAT THE SOVIETS CONSIDER THE POLITICAL
AND STRATEGIC ISSUES, WHICH THEY HAVE TWICE INVOKED IN THE PAST YEAR,
TO BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN LOOKING THE OTHER WAY AND OBEYING THE
NORWEGIAN'S REGULATIONS.
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